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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Fort Connah Restoration Society

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Install Vault Privy

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action: The Fort Connah Historic Site is located 4 miles north of St. Ignatius US Highway 93 between St. Ignatius and Charlo. The address is 1033 Timberlane Road, Ronan, MT 59864. A portion of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 13, Township 19 North, Range 20 West, P.M.M.

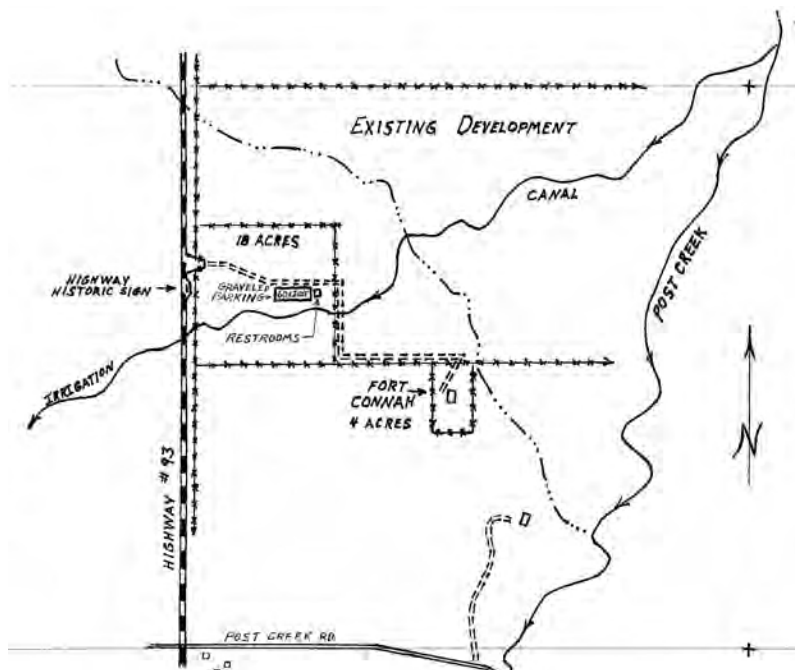


Figure 1 – Map of Fort Connah Restoration Society Properties.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary

guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

(a)(i) *Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;*

(ii) *May not limit the number of members;*

(iii) *may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and*

(iv) *shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or*

(b) *Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.*

5. Need for the Action(s):

There are no permanently available latrine facilities. Those that are available are rented, non-handicapped accessible, portable toilets, which are only available during special events.

6. Objectives for the Action(s):

Install a permanent handicapped accessible latrine facility.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:

The proposed improvements cover a significantly smaller area than the total acreage and will be safely spread within the leased properties (see figure 2).

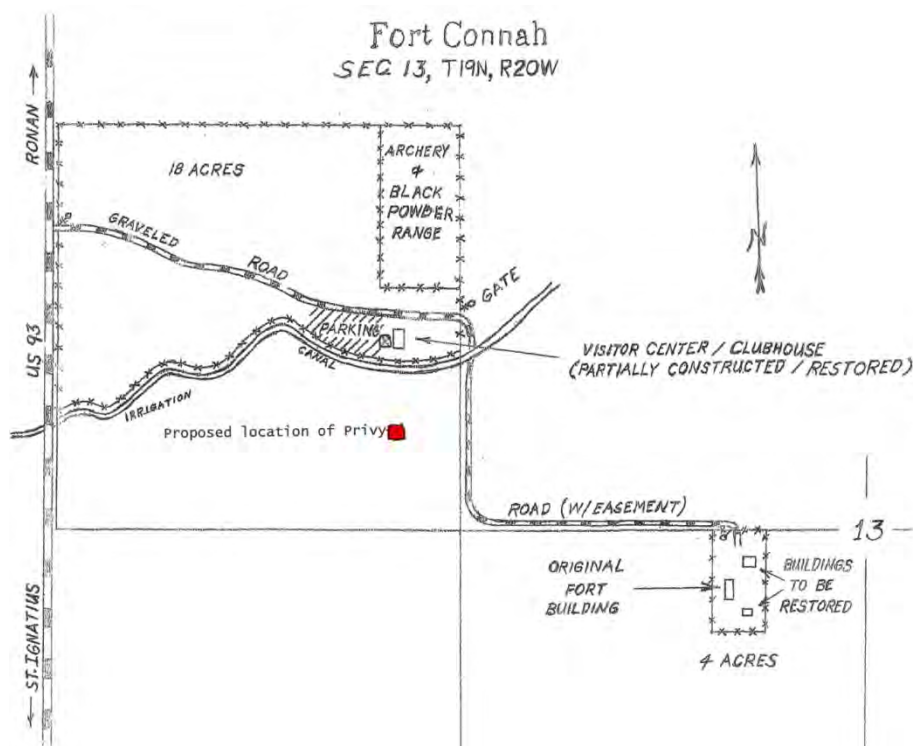


Figure 2 – Location of proposed Vault Toilet (Privy) installation

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):

The 18 acres are open grassland with a previous history of grazing. Grazing continues on the surrounding properties.

9. Description of Project:

Install a permanent handicapped accessible, cement vault, latrine facility. The project consists of the excavation and installation of a 1000-gallon watertight concrete septic tank to serve as a sealed containment pit for the latrine facility and building construction. The sealed pit latrine facility will be located more than 50' from the irrigation canal (see Figure 2).

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:

None

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
Lake County	Wastewater Treatment	4/11/2012
Environmental Health	System Installation Permit	

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$600

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: Sapphire Mountain Men, The Lewis and Clark Travelers Rest Brigade, The Montana Ghost Town Society, and the Boy Scouts. Original purchase of the property was made with grant money allocated for purchase of the 18 acres from "Coal-Tax" money from the Montana Cultural Trust. The Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes matched the grant money. There was also a matching grant through the Flathead Community Development for the Restoration Society.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club, Lake County, the associated project vendors, contractors, and Tribal authorities.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

George Knapp, 2445 Blue Mountain Road, Missoula, MT 59804, (406) 549-4431

15. Other Pertinent Information: The site of Fort Connah is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Fort Connah was a Hudson's Bay Trading Post established in 1846. One of the three original buildings still remains and is believed to be the oldest standing building in Montana. It was active from 1846 to 1871. The remaining building is a hand-hewn, 375-square-foot log building that is the only surviving structure. The massive ten-inch-square hand-hewn beams are stacked horizontally to form the walls, the same type of construction used by the Hudson Bay Company. Aerial infrared scanning of the surrounding land shows tepee rings where Indians camped while trading.

Shooting range applications require the participating governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 21, 2012

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project). Installation of concrete vault privy.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range and historic site without improvements proposed. The Society would continue to rent portable latrines for special events as needed. Visitors to Fort Connah would continue to be required to travel off-site for bathroom facilities, which could be inconvenient for some.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:

NONE. Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, or prudent. Neither the proposed alternative or the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations): None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

2. & 5. There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands. There is however, an irrigation canal running east to west through the property south of the proposed shooting range. The canal is approximately 75 yards from the back of the shooting line and over 200 yards from the impact area. There is a 24 inch culvert between the shooting line and the target area to facilitate draining of that area. A permit was granted by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes through their Tribal Irrigation authority as part of the initial 2005 EA for establishment of the range. The site has been inspected by the tribal Natural Resources Department with both wildlife & environmental personnel during the initial 2005 EA.

9. This proposed project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply. However, this site is a recognized historic site and resides on tribal lands.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

4. The surrounding land ownership is private and the range is leased from a private party through the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. Past and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range/alterd areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The Fort Connah Restoration Society proposed alternative, to provide a concrete vault privy is supported by its members and the public. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Para. 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? Individually, the proposed actions have minor impacts. However, it was determined that there are no significant or potentially significant cumulatively impacts. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore, an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

George Knapp, 2445 Blue Mountain Road, Missoula, MT 59804
MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

GENE R. HICKMAN
MS Wildlife Management
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: June 29, 2012

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's web site and through a legal ad in the *Valley Journal* announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period.